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## **HADITH AND PROPHET MUHAMMAD AUTHORITY: Understanding of Jonathan A.C. Brown**

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### **Abstract**

Hadith is frequently the subject of research by Muslim academics and Westerners. Both Muslim academics and orientalist have debated the legitimacy of the hadith for a long time. Jonathan AC Brown is a western Muslim scholar who contributes to rationally explaining the study of hadith so that it is easily accepted by beginners; his work demonstrates his commitment to the study of Islamic studies. This study follows a library research approach in which Jonathan Brown's book "*Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*" is utilized as the primary reference source, which is then supplemented with scholarly publications and journals on Jonathan Brown. The author used the descriptive analysis technique. According to the findings of this study, a hadith is a report about the Prophet consisting of the main text that describes his words or actions, the way of transmission (isnad) that serves to convey, and finally the giver. The authority of Muhammad is that of a Prophet who functions as a teacher, leader, and role model, as well as someone who has knowledge of the future. However, because the Prophet was an ordinary person, he did not have full authority in some matters.

**Keywords:** Jonathan Brown, hadith, authority

## Abstrak

**Hadis dan Otoritas Nabi Muhammad: Pemahaman Jonathan A.C. Brown.** Hadis sering menjadi bahan kajian yang tidak hanya dilakukan oleh sarjana muslim, namun juga barat. Berbagai pro dan kontra akan keaslian hadis telah lama berkembang, baik sarjana muslim maupun orientalis. Jonathan A.C Brown, merupakan sarjana muslim barat yang berkontribusi dalam menjelaskan kajian hadis secara rasional sehingga mudah diterima kaum pemula, karya yang dihasilkannya merupakan bukti keseriusan dalam kajian studies islamic. Penelitian ini merupakan model penelitian kepustakaan (library reseach) dimana, buku “Hadith: Muhammad’s legacy in the medieval and modern world”Brown dijadikan sebagai sumber rujukan utama, kemudian didukung oleh karya ilmiah dan jurnal yang berkaitan dengan Jonathan Brown. Penulis menggunakan metode analisis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa hadis adalah laporan tentang Nabi, yang terdiri dari teks utama untuk menjelaskan kata- kata atau tindakannya, rantai transmisi (isnad) yang berfungsi untuk mengkomunikasikan, kemudian penyampai. Otoritas Muhammad merupakan seorang Nabi yang memiliki peran sebagai guru, panutan, dan teladan, dan seseorang yang mampu memiliki akses mengetahui masa depan. Akan tetapi Nabi adalah seorang manusia biasa sehingga tidak secara keseluruhan menjadi otoritatif dalam beberapa hal.

**Kata kunci:** Jonathan Brown, hadis, otoritas

## Pendahuluan

After the Qur'an, the majority of academics agree on Hadith as a source of Islamic law, hence its place in Islamic teachings is critical. The Prophet Muhammad's role as the first interpreter has demonstrated the importance of hadith in perfecting the Qur'an's intent so that everything related to it becomes guidance apart from the Qur'an (Asror & Musbikin, 2015, p. 279) The Prophet Muhammad's role as the bearer of the revelation is paralleled by the importance of the hadith (Muhajir, 2017, p. 3) Taking this stance, hadith can become a central position that can be employed as an argument in any religious movement.

When some Western scholars started a study of hadith, the place of hadith as a source of law was questioned. Because it connects to the legitimacy of the hadith itself, discourse on the western study, hereinafter referred to as Orientalis,<sup>1</sup> becomes an important item to pay attention to and cannot be overlooked<sup>2</sup> (Karim, 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> *Orientalist* terminology is a way or method used to study and understand the Eastern world, this is based on the experience of Western people. The opposite of the orientalist is the *accidentalist*.

<sup>2</sup> According to Edward W. Said, there are three reasons why Orientalists conduct in-depth research on hadith, namely for the interests of colonization, the interests of spreading the religion and the interests of science. The most neutral goal is the interest of science.

Historically, The study of the east (orient) by westerners has a long history, dating back to the 17th century. Although the name orientalist was not coined until the 18th century (Bunke, 1995, p. 267). Then, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, when European nations began colonizing or colonialism, orientalist filed a case against hadith (Idris, 2018, p. 25). Almost all Islamic regions were colonized by European nations during this period. The seeds of European studies of the East germinated in this atmosphere.

Before the attacks of hadith by western scholars, orientalist views on Islam began by condemning the religion itself, claiming that Islam is a reformation of Judaism and Christianity, and hence is not a distinct religion. Many of the orientalist authors who later wrote about Islam indecently (Nurhaedi, 2003, p. 170–171), this also applies to hadith, which is their target because it is one of the guidelines for Muslims, especially their assumption of hadith departs from distrust of the Prophet's prophetic status, so that the hadith is not accepted, and was made by Muslims in the first three centuries (al-Syibal, 1997, p. 32). Many research results were born by western scholars to test the authenticity of hadith; however, their research tends to be more focused on dating or dating the hadith, which means they are more focused on how to assess the historicity of the hadith to then reconstruct or compose the history of the events they believe occurred at the start of the Islamic era (Asror & Musbikin, 2015, p. 32).

Among the important western figures who have aggressively criticized hadith is Ignaz Goldziher, through his monumental work entitled *Mohammadanische Studies*, he rejects the authenticity of the hadith which<sup>3</sup> has been the guideline for Muslims, because the hadith of the Prophet is only an artificial product of the social and political conditions of his time. Ignaz's thinking was later developed by Joseph Schacht (Permana, Arzam, Ds, Yusuf, & Witro, 2021, p. 62) through his work *The Origin of Muhammad and Jurispundence* (1950),<sup>u</sup> he also doubts the authenticity of the Prophet's hadiths, especially those related to fiqh law (Yakub, 1996, p. 8–9). According to him, between the hadith experts and the law, they are equally responsible for the falsification of the hadith. This is because there are legal traditions, of course, related to the laws made by them (Yakub, 1996, p. 8–9), then the hadith is needed as its legitimacy, this is where the

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<sup>3</sup> The two orientalist figures above have spawned many criticisms that lead to distrust of the authenticity of the hadith, but their arguments were successfully refuted by Mustafa 'Azami through his work entitled *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* (1967).

position of the hadith experts in making the hadith is based on the companions until it boils down to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Both the arguments of Ignaz and Joseph both question the authenticity of the hadith, with many arguments that seem to emphasize that the hadith cannot be accounted for.

Goldziher and Schacht's theories received both positive and negative feedback from their successors. The idea of the two did not die with them; instead, they became the basis for several orientalists, including Joseph Van Ess and G. H. A. Juynboll. However, not all Western scholars agree with Ignaz and Schacht's theory, that they defend hadith (Asror & Musbikin, 2015, p. 512) while admitting errors in the studies of their predecessors, such as Nabia Abbott, Johan Fuck, and Jonathan A.C Brown.

Jonathan AC Brown (hence referred to as Brown) is a Muslim Western scholar who is currently one of the leading authorities in hadith studies. He was one of the first to respond to Goldziher and Schacht's skepticism. Brown believes that Ignaz and Schacht are not being objective in their assertions, which leads to inaccurate interpretations of significant historical evidence connected to the history of the hadith collection. Unlike his two predecessors, Brown defended the legitimacy of hadith by praising hadith study in the Muslim intellectual tradition.

Specifically, this article aims to unravel the thoughts of Brown regarding his views on rationalized hadith and the authority of the Prophet Muhammad, this is considered important to comprehensively map how hadith teaching is carried out in the west as a form of maintaining the existence of hadith.<sup>4</sup> To answer this question, the author will explore Brown's thoughts through his book “*Hadith: Muhammad's legacy in the medieval and modern world*”. This book is one of the works he dedicated to beginners in understanding hadith.

So far, Indonesian hadith scholars have not paid much attention to Brown's scholarship. There are only writings “*The Study of Hadith Criticism Perspective Jonathan Ac Brown (Analysis of Three Tiered Method)*” by Arif Budiman et al. (Budiman, Safri, & Wendry, 2020). This paper examines the Three Tiered Method for determining the authenticity of a hadith, as well as the method of applying it to the hadith on the recommendation to dress in white. The conclusion is that the Three-tiered

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<sup>4</sup> The author's anxiety in finding supporting data on courses on western orientalists became an attraction to later write down one of Jonathan Brown's focuses in positioning the hadith.

approach is still a theory related to the method proposed by classical Muslim academics. The idea emphasizes Isnad's circle of demands, evaluating source reliability and looking for hadith reinforcements. The findings of the approved hadith in white clothing demonstrate that the hadith is authentic since it originates from the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Furthermore, the writings of Mochamad Ismail Hasan entitled *Jonathan Brown's Canonization of Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Hasan, 2019). The article discusses the process of canonizing the book of Sahih al-Bukhari by Jonathan Brown. In the conclusion of the article, Brown shows that *Sahih Bukhari* is a canon that has the highest authority value and has gone through a series of long processes. The process started from a critical study carried out by classical scholars of hadith and gave birth to other versions of hadith works, such as *the mustakhraj* book, the *mustadrak*, and the *Ilal book*. Between the two articles above, the author is conducting a study of Brown's thoughts focusing on how Brown understands the hadith itself and the authority of the Prophet Muhammad. This article is considered important to see what is behind Brown as a contemporary Western scholar in studying hadith.

This paper is a form of library research with a descriptive analysis approach. The sources that the author gets are from Brown's book, then supporting articles that provide an overview of his life and thoughts. After getting the data, the author uses content analysis to get answers from what is formulated.

### **Biography of Jonathan AC Brown**

Jonathan Andrew Cleveland Brown, hereafter known as Brown, was born in the United States on August 9, 1977 (Hasan, 2019), precisely in the city of Washington. He is a Muslim, but previously followed the religion of his parents, namely Christianity. Brown's father is Jonathan C. Brown, while his mother is Ellen Clifton Patterson. Brown's mother is an anthropologist (Budiman et al., 2020, p. 5). His decision to convert to Islam since attending college, there are many lessons from Islamic teachings which can then be concluded that religion should lead to a much better standard of living, and not make it difficult to carry out the teachings.

Brown as a person who studies Islam, can understand many languages, including Arabic, Persian, Latin, French, German.<sup>5</sup> He was educated at various

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<sup>5</sup> <https://drjonathanbrown.com/cv/>

universities. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in History at Georgetown University, besides he was proud that he got the *Cumlaude predicate*. Then, he studied Arabic at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA), Egypt. He graduated in 2001. Brown then continued his doctoral program and graduated in 2006 in Islamic Thought with a Ph.D. (*Islamic Thought*) degree, more precisely at the Department of Near Eastern Language and Civilizations, University of Chicago, and holds honors *with honors*.<sup>6</sup>

After completing his education, Brown then served at the Center for the Institute of Eastern Language and Culture, Washington University to be exact. He also has a position as research *director* with his friend, Nazir Khan. The name of the place is *Yaqeen Institute*. The purpose of this institution is to counteract radicalism. He also serves on Islam at Georgetown University, Washington DC Alwaleed Bin Talal Chair of Islamic Civilization, University Of Washington, Seattle, Washington (Budiman et al., 2020, p. 6).

### **The Works of Jonathan AC Brown**

Brown is a well-known western Islamic scholar who is quite prolific and holds the status of professor of Islamic civilization. Brown has traveled to various countries as part of his studies, including Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, South Africa, India, Indonesia, and Iran. This is supported by various publications about Islam in general, especially in the field of hadith. Brown's first book, *Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy* (Brown, 2014), covers topics that have fueled debate in the modern world, such as the religion of the Prophet Muhammad. Themes such as jihad, underage marriage, and stoning under *Syari'ah* law have all sparked debate. There are many misunderstandings about the legal principles and teachings of Islam. This book will help readers gain a thorough understanding of Islamic doctrines, as well as how to balance reason and revelation, weigh science and religion, and negotiate the eternal truths of scripture in the face of changing values.

*Second, Hadith: Muhammad's legacy in the medieval and modern world.*(Brown, 2009) This book is an expression of Jonathan AC Brown's response to issues from hadith,

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<sup>6</sup> (Budiman, Safri, & Wendry, 2020, p. 5) look at Jonathan Brown, George University- Academia. Edu, <https://georgetown.academia.edu/JonathanACBrown/CurriculumVitae>

hadith criticism, and controversies surrounding the authority of the Prophet. What Brown put forward is a form of explanation for the approval of Muslim scholars who are pro-hadith, he conveyed several times with logic. The cons that he faced came from the realization that most of the Islamic law did not only come from the Qur'an but the hadiths. However, the status of the hadith itself is still a matter of debate, making it more complex.

*Third, Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction* (Brown, 2011). This book contains a description of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and also how the great role of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic civilization. *Fourth work, Slavery, and Islam*. In this book, Brown describes how Islam views slavery in theory, and in reality, how it is practiced throughout Islamic civilization, he is very careful in looking at the arguments put forward by Muslim scholars for the abolition of slavery. *The fifth work, The Canonization of al-Bukhari and Muslim* (Brown, 2007). Based on canon studies, this book investigates the origin, development, and core function of the canon of Sunni hadith, al-Bukhari, and Muslim collections of 'Authentic' traditions, from the time of their author to the modern period.

In addition, it turns out that Brown is also productive in writing several articles in the field of Islamic law, Salafism, and other Islam.<sup>7</sup> Such as: “*Faithful Dissenters: Skepticism about the Miracles of Saints in Sunni Islam, The Rules of Matn Criticism: There Are No Rules,*” *Islamic Law and Society*”, *Scholars and Charlatans on the Baghdad-Khurasan Circuit from the Ninth to the Eleventh Centuries, Is the Devil in the Details?: Tension between Comprehensiveness and Minimalism in the Shariah, Even if it's not true it's True: Using Unreliable Hadiths in Sunni Islam, Did the Prophet Say It or Not?: the Literal, Historical and Effective Truth of Hadiths in Sunni Islam, New Data on the Delateralization of Dād and its Merger with Zā' in Classical Arabic: Contributions from Old South Arabian and the Earliest Islamic Texts on Dad / Za' Minimal Pairs, Critical Rigor vs. Juridical Pragmatism: How Legal Theorists and Hadith Scholars Approached the Backgrowth of Isnads, The Last Days of al-Ghazzali and the Tripartite Division of Sufi World: Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali's Letter to the Seljuq Vizier and Commentary*”.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://drjonathanbrown.com/cv/>

## Jonathan AC Brown's interpretation of Hadith

In this case, the author will explain how the structure of Brown's thought on hadith is based on what he wrote in a book entitled *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in The Medieval and Modern World*. Brown himself had a strong reason for writing the book, various questions were asked by students in Islamic studies and his colleagues regarding the interrelationships between the existing Sunni traditions, whether they were representative of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, then Brown undertook the project of writing this book to answer the questions raised (Brown, 2009, p. vii). This book is an attempt by Brown to explain hadith to novice scholars.

In connection with Brown's goal of writing a hadith book for beginners, especially the reviewers from the west, in his writings, he provides an overview of hadith by rationalizing it with context. When viewed from the existing chapters, Brown's writing describes the study of hadith from classical Muslims, terminology, the position of the Prophet Muhammad, and the function of hadith. In addition, Brown also explained the orientalist theories regarding hadith.

Brown explained at the beginning of the introduction regarding the very noble position of hadith science, many scholars have struggled in their lives to maintain and formulate the authenticity of hadith. The scholars referred to by Brown are al-Bukhari, az-Zahabi, and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani. This book is nothing but a form of appreciation for their genius (Budiman et al., 2020, p. 3).

*“The science of hadith is a noble one, and generations of scholars far, far more capable and dedicated than I have dedicated their lives to transmitting, analyzing, and sorting through the legacy attributed to Muhammad. One could spend a lifetime reading the works of scholars like al-Bukhari, al-Dhahabi, and Ibn Hajar, and two lifetimes trying to keep up with them. Matching their accomplishments is inconceivable to me. I can only hope that this book provides an adequate introduction to their work and the influence it has had on Islamic Civilization”* (Brown, 2009, p. X).

Brown calls the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad as *Sunna* (Brown, 2009) and is a normative legacy. Even though it stands in second place in terms of esteem after the Qur'an, the sunnah serves as a guide to comprehending and interpreting the holy book. What the Prophet Muhammad did set an example for and



reflected the morality of the Qur'an, which eventually became a legal normative and was followed by his followers.

Then the hadith is a report about the Prophet, which consists of the main text to explain his words or actions, transmission (*isnad*) whose function is to communicate, then the transmitter. The report was collected and written by the *sahaba* as historical documentation that can be used as a guide, so that future generations can imitate the behavior of the prophet and take the value of the Apostle's example.

Brown mostly quotes the opinion of classical scholars in giving the terminology of hadith. On the other hand, the concept of *sunnah* and hadith in Brown's understanding is also followed by a contemporary Muslim scholar, namely Fazlurrahman. According to Rahman (Zakiyah, Saputra, & Alhafiza, n.d., p. 8), the *sunnah* is a valid and operative concept since the beginning of Islam and applies throughout the ages. Although the term *sunnah* is not directly mentioned in the Qur'an, this is illustrated by his exemplary attitude in the Qur'an. The Prophet Muhammad's demeanor and diversity of life are normative for his followers, which Rahman refers to as *sunnah* (Suryani, 2020, p. 8). Hadith is referred to as a verbal tradition, a tradition that is transmitted. Verbal tradition is the opposite of non-verbal or practical traditions which are called *sunnah*. Brown agrees with the definitions of the existing scholars (Budiman et al., 2020, p. 8).

*“As in a game of 'Telephone,' a report could mutate as it was passed from person to person. As we know from our own daily lives, reports could also be repeated in expanded or contracted form depending on context”* (Brown, 2009, p. 67).

Brown uses the analogy of a report that can be mutated when delivered over the phone because, in ordinary life, a report might be repeated in an extended or narrowed form depending on the situation. A hadith is a collection of narrated stories. As a result, variations in hadith content are to be expected.

Historically, hadith is different from the Qur'an, because hadith takes a long time to reach the accounting stage, various war events become one of the obstacles. So various groups manipulate the authority of the hadith. Finally, the scholars made a method to ascertain whether a hadith can be accounted for or not its authenticity.

Even though it occupies the second position, the hadith is very important, this is proven by using the hadith as a guide in solving problems that have not been explained

in the Qur'an, even in legal discussions, scholars search *isnad* whether it reaches the Prophet Muhammad or not.

The *hadith*, according to Brown, is extremely essential and even serves as a complement to the Qur'an. Many Islamic principles are not addressed or mentioned in detail in the Qur'an since it is not a source that can answer all concerns. The Qur'an usually just gives a broad description of things. Brown argues that most later religious traditions arose from Muhammad's legacy, in which he served as God's messenger, conveying the intent of Islam's essential doctrines through his words and acts (Brown, 2009, p. 11).

Brown also discusses how to determine the veracity of a *hadith*, using the example of a modern journalist searching for and receiving the news. When getting information, it is important to examine if the source can be trusted; one approach is looking for alternative sources that provide the same information (Brown, 2009, p. 68). Brown places a high value on the content of information, as evidenced by who delivers the news ( *transmitter* ). Brown did point out, however, that cultural and time-space factors play a role in the value of the information's content (Brown, 2009, p. 69).

Brown's contributions as a researcher, Islamic scholar, and educator led him to fresh ideas concerning the study of *hadith* that had previously been articulated by classical academics. Brown gives a broad summary of the contemporary situation so that newcomers can quickly grasp the meaning of *hadith*. Brown hopes that by using parables, the public, particularly his students, will accept it more readily. As stated in the book, one of the causes in creating a book named "*Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*" also stemmed from inquiries from students and colleagues.

Brown's work has a unique appeal since he has simplified the complexities of teaching the notion of *hadith*, making it more approachable to westerners through the use of ordinary language (Zayd, n.d., p. 64).

### **Prophet Muhammad's Authority**

Brown gives an argument based on the facts that have been explained in the arguments of the holy book Al-Qur'an, he claims that Muhammad is a prophet who has a role as a teacher, role model, and role model, this has been explained in the

Qur'an. The holy book repeatedly commands Muslims to be obedient and obedient to Allah and His Prophet, in the Qur'an sura al-Anfal verse 1.

لَوْلَا أَنْفَالُ لِ الْأَنْفَالِ لِلَّهِ الرَّسُولِ أَتَفُوا اللَّهَ أَصْلِحُوا اتَّ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ لَهُ ۖ إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*Meaning: "They ask you (Muhammad) about (the distribution of) the spoils of war. Say, "The spoils of war belong to Allah and the Messenger (according to the provisions of Allah and His Messenger), so fear Allah and improve relations between yourselves, and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are believers."*

According to Brown, the Prophet Muhammad is the ideal role model for Muslims, this is contained in the Qur'an surah al-Ahzab verse 21.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

*Meaning: "Indeed, there is in the Messenger of Allah a good role model for you (that is) for those who hope (the mercy of) Allah and (the coming of) the Day of Judgment, and he often mentions Allah."*

Brown's defense of the Prophet as a role model was one of the most crucial points he made in answer to charges about why the hadiths were not written down in the beginning. For him, the Prophet is a father figure and a role model for the companions, and whatever the Prophet says stays in their collective memory, thus there is no need to write it down. How many people, like a parable, jot down their memories of their grandmothers or parents? Brown uses the artwork to make a point by depicting everyday life in a more realistic way (Zayd, n.d., p. 65).

Actually, between *Sunni* and *Syiah* Muslims there are different viewpoints in addressing the status of the level of the Prophet. However, both of them agreed that even though the Prophet Muhammad was appointed as a prophet, the status of humanity was also attached, so the mistakes that occurred were a way of teaching. There is a hadith where the Prophet said " *Indeed I forgot or was made to forget to give the sunnah* ".

The hadith tells of the question asked by sahaba after the prayer, "O Messenger of Allah, is it adding a raka'ah in the prayer?", then the Prophet Muhammad again asked, "What happened?" They replied, " You, O Messenger of Allah, pray five raka'ahs.". The Prophet with a wise attitude replied "Indeed I am only human. I can forget, as you all can forget. So if I forget, remind me ." (HR. Bukhari-Muslim).

Brown says that no Muslim cleric has considered the possibility of the Prophet Muhammad making statements when he was angry and weak. When Abdullah bin 'Amr got reproached for writing what the Prophet said, Abdullah bin Amr stopped writing, then he conveyed the incident to the Messenger of Allah. Rasulullah SAW then said, " *Write. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, nothing will come out of it (this month) but the truth.* " In the Qur'an, it is also explained that what the Prophet Muhammad said was not his own will, but a revelation that was sent down.

The next problem is the irregularity of the revelation about the future. Brown answered that as a Muslim, believing the Prophet Muhammad was an ordinary human being, it was impossible to make revelations. Prophets are the only media to convey God's messages. Regarding the future that was conveyed, Muhammad did have direct access to God regarding the future, so that he could know about the victories in war, this was only known to him. Not surprisingly, some hadiths mention the future decline of the nation or events that will occur before the Day of Judgment. There is a hadith " *there will not come a time for you except the time after it will be worse than that* " (Brown, 2009, p. 10).

Muslims agree that hadith can describe authority in three ways: through the Prophet Muhammad's words, deeds, or things done in his presence, yet he is not opposed to it. As a final resort, Muslim scholars agree that anything done in the presence of the Prophet Muhammad that is not banned will be accepted automatically.

What needs to be underlined about the authority of the Prophet Muhammad is that despite his status as a prophet, not everything the Prophet did was authoritative. Because the Prophet was appointed as an apostle when he was 40 years old, it means that at the age before that of course what was said did not become a normative authority. In addition, it should also be remembered that the Prophet did not understand all fields, this was proven when he met a farmer who was transplanting small dates, then he gave different advice, it turned out that he was wrong (Brown, 2009, p. 11). This has been explained in a hadith:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَرَّ بِقَوْمٍ يُلْقِحُونَ فَقَالَ لَوْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا لَصَلَحَ قَالَ فَحَرَجَ شَيْصًا فَمَرَّ بِهِمْ  
فَقَالَ مَا لِنَحْلِكُمْ قَالُوا فُلْتِ كَذَا وَكَذَا قَالَ أَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِأَمْرِ دُنْيَاكُمْ

*Meaning: "From Anas that the Prophet SAW once passed a people who were marrying date palm trees and then he said: "If they did not do it, the dates*

*would be (still) good." But after that, it turns out that the dates grow damaged. Until one day the Prophet SAW passed them again and saw it, he asked: "What is wrong with your date palms?" They answered; "Didn't you say this and that?" He then said: "You know better about your worldly affairs." (HR Muslim: 4358)*

The Prophet SAW has described it very clearly. that for the business of pollinating dates, the farmers have more expertise than the Prophet. Through the hadith information above, it can be seen that regarding the world of agriculture, indeed a farmer knows, as well as other professions, traders will understand the world of trade better than farmers. The Prophet's statement above provides instructions on the appreciation of professional expertise or fields owned by Muslims (Zailani, 2017, p. 6).

What was done by the Prophet Muhammad was not entirely authoritative which had to be done, for example wearing a robe, beard, was seen as an option. In understanding the authority of the Prophet Muhammad as an intermediary from God's revelation and a role model to give birth to hadith, Brown has nothing to do with refusing to acknowledge the status of the Prophet Muhammad. Even though he grew up in a Christian household, when he converted to Islam, he discovered that studying hadith piqued his interest.

## **Conclusion**

Jonathan AC Brown, who is shortened to Brown, is a person who lived in a Christian environment as a child but converted to Islam when he entered college. Brown is one of the thinkers as well as a contemporary Muslim teacher who contributes to maintaining the existence of hadith in the west through the academic space. Through one of his works, he tries to explain hadith to beginners in a language that fits the current context. Such as exemplifying the process of transmitting hadith by telephone, where to convey a message of course a transmitter may shorten or expand a sentence to fit the context and be understood by the recipient. In response to this, Brown explained the terminology of the hadith itself, which he followed from the opinions of several classical scholars. What is Brown's foundation is a form of appreciation for the ancient scholars such as al-Bukhari, Az-Zahabi, and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani for the study of hadith. Regarding the Prophet Muhammad's Authority, Brown stated that the Prophet was an example character, a messenger with knowledge of the future. Despite his status

as a Prophet, the fact that the Prophet was a regular human being meant that not everything he did was authoritative.

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